Box 52 Association

The Line Box

Vol. 18 No. 1

WOW! EIGHTEEN YEARS OF THE LINEBOX!

I had no idea when I approached the Board of Directors in 2003 with the idea to restart a newsletter for the Association that it would still be around and have grown into what is a well-regarded and successful publication!

So, let's kick off the 2021-2022 Line Box season with another great issue and here's a look inside:

- FDNY Super Pumper System
- Rutherford Avenue Conflagration
- Apparatus Update
- New Fire Station Construction
- Metro Multiples
- This and That

Mea Culpa

In the Summer Issue, I neglected to thank the following for information for the Multiple Alarm Report: Member Mark Wolfgang, Dedham Chief Spillane, Somerville District .Chief Frank Lee.

Pour a glass of apple cider and a nice wedge of apple pie and enjoy!

MULTIPLE ALARMS
August 1st – September 30th

Thanks to Members Edward Morrissey, Frank Barry, Mark Wolfgang Boston Fire Alarm, Belmont Dispatcher Edward Pendergast for their assistance with this report.

August

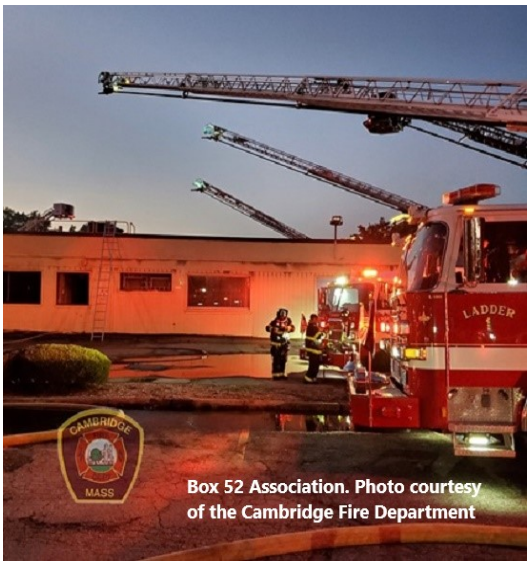
Date	Time	Box	City	Address	Building
08/17	08	2-2378	Boston	60 Fenwood Rd	B&W underground parking garage
08/24	1916	3-91	Cambridge	617 Concord Ave	1 story industrial, vacant
08/27	0903	3-3524	Boston	69 Floyd St	2.5 wdfrm
08/28	0216	3-7474	Medford	72 Newbern Ave	3 story brick block long apt bldg. OMD
08/30	2230	2-113	Watertown	2 Watertown St	Commercial bldg. Bakery

Cambridge Tuesday August 24th

The Cambridge Emergency Operations Center received several 911 calls reporting a fire in a vacant one story former office building at 617 Concord Ave. Box 91 was transmitted at 1913 hours. First arriving Engine Company 9 reported a working fire and this followed a few seconds later by the second alarm. The fire was fought under high heat and humidity. It was found that Lithium batteries were burning in the building and a defensive attack was made. A third alarm was sounded for relief manpower. The allout was transmitted at 0300. Two hours and 46 minutes later, calls were again received from early morning commuters reporting fire in the building. Box 91 was again sounded and arriving companies found a re-kindle involving the lithium batteries.

Time	Box	Engines	Ladders	Rescue	Chief and Other Units
1913	91	9, 8, 1	**4, 1**	**R1**, Sq. 2*, 4	Div. 1
1918	W.F.	5	**3**		
1919	2-91	6, 3, 2	**L2**		Div. 2
2009	3-91	4, Som. E6, Wat. E1	**Bos. L15**		

**Division 2 and Squad 2 were operating at another alarm at the time of the box-Editor*



Boston Friday August 27th

Fire alarm reported receiving calls for fire on Floyd St transmitted Box 3524 Calendar & Lucerne District 8

L-29 arrived 1st due @ 0905 and reported heavy fire 2nd & 3rd floor

2nd alarm Box 3524 by orders of Rescue Company 2 @ 0906 and reported that address of 9 Floyd Street.

3rd alarm ordered by C7 Deputy Chief Doherty @ 0918

Special call for 2 extra trucks @ 0952 Ladders 15 & 4

Companies had heavy fire conditions in a large 2.5 wood frame OMD fire had worked its way into attic and cockloft, Companies worked in high heat and humidity. E17 had a dead hydrant and went off tank water till new water supply was established. Companies found heavy fire in the attic which was knocked down my multiple lines. Companies could see into attic from 2nd floor but had trouble finding & gaining access.

Time	Box	Engines	Ladders	Rescue	Chief and Other Units
0905	3524	52, 16, 24, 18(RIT)	29, 23	2	D8
0906	2-3524	53, 17, 42	6, 16, TL-10		C7, D7, D12 ,H1
0918	3-3524	37, 21	7		C1
0952	Sp. Call		15, 4		

Medford Saturday August 28th

At 0216 Medford 911 center began to receive calls for a building fire at 72 and 86 Newbern Avenue. Box 7474 was transmitted with C2, E 5, 1, 2, L1 responding

E5 reported working fire at 72 Newbern at 0220 E4, L2, A2 responded

C2 ordered 2-7474 @ 0232 E 6, Arl E2, Som. E6, Malden L3

Fire on the 3rd floor of a block long brick OMD. Fire apt was un-occupied. Firefighters encountered 'Collier's Mansion" conditions and companies had great difficulty in accessing the seat of the fire.

3rd alarm was ordered for additional manpower at 0257 bringing Everett E2, Malden E3 and Somerville L2 to the fire. 2 firefighters suffered minor injuries and were treated and released from hospital.

September

Date	Time	Box	City	Address	Building
09/05	1355	2nd	Winthrop*	10 Vine St	Large 2.5 wdfr OMD
09/06	0033	3-5485	Boston	32 Perthshire Rd	2.5 wdfr
09/06	2211	2-313	Watertown	143 Spruce St	2.5 wdfr
09/14	2033	2-4711	Needham	95 Edgewater Dr	2.5 wdfr dwelling
09/15	1920	2-2143	Somerville	29 Central St	Church

**Winthrop has discontinued the use of box numbers-Editor*

Boston Monday Sept 6

0032 Fire Alarm transmitted box 5485 for a reported fire at 32 Perthshire Rd in Brighton,

Engine 51 arrived at 0034 and reported fire showing in the rear, a few seconds later at 0035 Lt Barry of E51 ordered the 2nd alarm reporting people trapped on the roof. At the same time his Pipeman told Ladder 14 to throw ground ladders at the front of the building. Car 11 with District Chief McDevitt arrived on scene and requested EMS to the front of the building.

At 0043 hrs Engine 41 reported that heavy fire had been knocked down, but still had fire in the 3rd floor. Chief McDevitt ordered a third alarm on box 5485 at 0044. At this time the 3rd floor rear porch was found to be compromised and companies were warned off.

E33 had pushed their line up the rear stairway and were hitting the fire in the 3rd floor. Ladder 14 reported to Command that during the primary search they had located a non-viable victim on the 3rd floor alpha/delta side. The victim was removed and transported from the scene. At 0057 hours Engine 29 operating on the second floor reported the fire knocked down and starting to overhaul.

C6 reported at 0058 that the primary search was completed and a secondary search was in progress and there was still fire in the 3rd floor. By 0105 hours the fire on the 3rd floor was knocked down, checking for extension.

At 0109 hours C1 reported arrival at the fire and at 0112 assumed command with C6 becoming operations. The secondary search of the building was completed and was negative.

0126 Motor Squad at the fire requested that Fire Alarm announce that “all pumps operating at the 3rd alarm keep pumps circulating so they do not over heat”.

Engine 30 and Ladder 9 were assigned as the detail companies.

This was the first fire using the new ten-alarm running card that was described in the Vol. 17 No. 4 issue of the Line Box.

Time	Box	Engines	Ladders	Rescue	Chief and Other Units
0032	5485	51, 29, 41, 33(RIT)	11, 14	1	D11
0035	2-5485	37, 7	26, 4, TL-3		C6, D9, D4, H1
0044	3-5485	22, 4	1		C1

Ladder 14 great placement and getting the stick to the third floor. BFD photo

MetroFire Firehouse Update: 2021

By Line Box Staff Member Mark Roche
Photos by the author, unless noted

By the time we go to print, the new firehouse for **Boston Engine 42 & Rescue 2** located at 1870 Columbus Ave should be occupied replacing their former station on the same lot Mark Roche photo.

Box 52 Association. Photo by member Mark Roche

Two of **Cambridge's** vintage firehouses are currently undergoing major renovations. Station 9 at 167 Lexington Ave (Built 1894) and Station 6 at 176 River Street built in 1891.

Construction is progressing on a new Public Safety building in **Dedham** on Bryant St at Washington St replacing their overcrowded HQ station at 436 Washington St Built in 1951.

Needham is expected to occupy their new Station 2 in November located at 707 Highland Ave on the site of the former Station 2 built in 1949

Demolition has been completed on the former Station 2 in **Revere** located at140 Lynnway in Point of Pines (Built 1938). Construction of a new station has begun on the same site. This station closed in 1992 and used for RFD storage. Photo by member James Cullen

Box 52 Association. Photo by member Mark Roche

The new **Waltham Station 1** located at 533 Moody St. was occupied on June 22, 2021. The new 4-bay station was architecturally blended to the original 3-bay station which was built in 1890.

Box 52 Association. Photo by Mark Roche

Construction is underway on the new **Woburn Fire HQ** station located on Main St at Forest Park. The new station will consolidate the former Station 3 at 654 Main St (Built 1906) and Station 2 at 911 Main St

Weymouth Station 2 at 636 Broad St has reopened with a fully staffed fire company (Engine 2) on October 1, 2021 after renovations and upgrades to the classic 1930 stone building. The station closed in 2008 and continued to serve as Weymouth Fire Headquarters

By David Parr

Line Box Staff Member

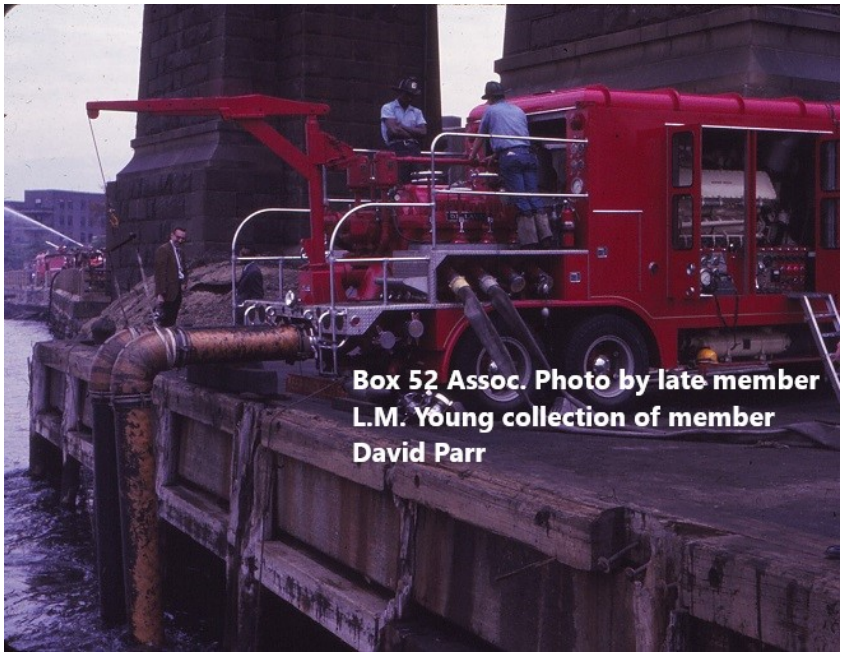
All photos by late member L. Murray Young collection of David Parr

With the recent delivery of a new “industrial” pumper to the FDNY, it brought back memories of the Super Pumper system used by the FDNY from 1965 until 1982. The new rig, built on a two door Ferrara chassis and equipped with a 5,250 GPM pump, 1,000-gallon tank, and able to carry 2,600 feet of 6” hose, has been assigned as FOAM 260 quartered with Engine 260 in Queens, and apparently will not be used as a new “super pumper” or part of the FDNY Satellite Water system.

So, let us take a trip back in time and examine the FDNY Super Pumper and the Super Pumper System!! In the early 1960’s, the standard pumper in the FDNY was equipped with a 750 GPM pump, with newer Mack “C” model pumpers being delivered with 1,000 GPM pumps. The problem being experienced in New York City, and other large, older cities was the difficulties in combatting major fires and high-rise fires with the modern pumpers of the day, and to deliver water quantities at a pressure adequate to penetrate the heart of the fire and extinguish it.

This was a problem being studied by the renowned marine architect William Francis Gibbs. Gibbs, who grew up in Philadelphia and was a “buff” attending many large fires, early on had explored the concept of a “land-based fireboat”. Gibbs designed 74% of the U.S. Navy Fleet used in World War II and had worked closely with the FDNY in 1938 designing the Fireboat Firefighter, which could pump 20,000 GPM through eight monitors. In the early 1960’s, there were diesel engines and pumps being developed that could be used to make Gibbs’s dream a reality. He worked with the Mack Truck Corporation to design a system which would resemble a land-based fireboat that could draw water from multiple hydrants or a static source (harbor / river) and deliver large volumes of water through large size monitor nozzle(s). Gibbs and Mack pitched the idea to the FDNY who on December 3, 1963, awarded them a contract for $ 875,000 to build the super pumper system.

The heart of the Super Pumper system was the actual Super Pumper itself, which was a massive pumping station on wheels. It consisted of a tractor and semi-trailer unit coupled together that were smaller in size than most highway tractor trailer rigs so it could easily maneuver through the city streets. The tractor was a Mack commercial model with a 225 hp diesel engine and 6 speed automatic transmission. The trailer contained a DeLaval six-stage pump rated at 8,800 GPM at 350 psi powered by a Napier Deltic 18-cylinder diesel engine rated at 2,400 RPM. The rig featured 2 – 12-inch inlets at the rear for drafting, 8 – 4 ½ inch inlets to accept hydrant lines, and 8 – 4 ½ inch discharge outlets. At the rear of the trailer was a small crane used to position the 12-inch fiberglass pipes used for drafting.



The Super pumper was most effective when drafting from a static water source or being fed by a Fireboat. Pumping at full capacity, the Super Pumper could supply 35 handlines or between 10 – 22 multi-versal nozzles, or 8 – 1,000 GPM pumpers up to 1,000 feet away.

The super tender used an identical Mack commercial tractor to pull a trailer capable of carrying 2,000 feet of 4 ½ inch hose in a flatbed arrangement as well as a compartment to carry other super pumper equipment. Under the tender trailer were 4 – 4 ½ inch manifolds where supply lines from the super pumper could be reduced to hand lines. The tender tractor was equipped with a 10,000 GPM Stang monitor, with tips ranging from 3 – 5 inches in diameter. The monitor could be supplied by up to 4 – 4 ½ inch feeder lines, and the tractor had to be equipped with hydraulic outriggers to stabilize it against nozzle reaction. The stream from this giant monitor could travel 600 feet and was often used to hydraulically demolish buildings.

The super tender apparatus could be easily split, with the tractor being disconnected from the trailer affording it the ability to maneuver the tractor with the super monitor into better positions for firefighting effectiveness. The super tender was initially equipped with a rear facing tiller position at the center rear which was used to assist in backing up to load hose back on the tender.

The original design of the Super Tender was to have 4 huge hose reels each carrying 2,000 feet of the 4 ½ inch hose, with the idea that the tender could layout 4 lines all at once. But it was quickly determined that the reel concept would not work so the tender design reverted to a flat hose load.

The final piece of the Super Pumper system was the satellite system that was introduced when the reel concept for the Super Tender was scrubbed. It featured three Mack “C85” chassis, with no pump, each carrying 2,000 feet of 4 ½ inch hose, and a 6-inch Stang monitor rated at 4,000 GPM fed by 2 – 4 ½ inch inlets on each side and tips ranging from 2 to 4 inches in diameter. The Satellites could drop their own feeder lines from the Super Pumper and operate their Stang monitors near the fire.

The Satellites became the workhorse of the Super Pumper System, as they would be able to layout their 4 ½ inch hose and use their Stang monitors even in situations where the Super Pumper was not required.

After much training, the Super Pumper System went into service on October 1, 1965. The Super Pumper and Super Tender were initially located at the quarters of Engine 211 / Ladder 119 at 26 Hooper Street in Brooklyn. Satellite 1 and the Satellite Officer (Car 71) were located at the quarters of Engine 31 in Manhattan. Satellite 2 was located at Engine 83 / Ladder 29 in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx, and Satellite 3 was located with Engine 242 in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn.

Staffing of the Super Pumper system included a Captain, 5 Lieutenants and 15 firefighters assigned to the Super Pumper and Super Tender. 30 firefighters were assigned to the Satellites (10 each), and the satellite officer was a Lieutenant. Typical minimum staffing for the system was an officer and firefighter on the Super Pumper; two firefighters on the Super Tender; two firefighters on each of the Satellites; and a Satellite Officer (Car 71) who responded with a station wagon with water supply maps and information.

The initial response of the Super Pumper system included all five components to all second alarms in Manhattan south of 34th Street, most of the borough of Brooklyn, and to all third alarms city wide.

Even before it went into service the system worked at its first fire, an 11 - alarm lumberyard fire in Brooklyn on August 12, 1965 where it drafted and delivered more than 7 million gallons of water. During the first full year of service the system responded to 46 incidents.

Other notable highlights of the history of the Super Pumper system included:

- February 2, 1967 – Due to the poor condition of the firehouse, Satellite 1 and the Satellite Officer were relocated to the former Engine 30 firehouse at 30 Spring Street. (Today the NYC Fire Museum)

- July 13, 1970 – Run card changed – only two Satellite units were assigned to respond rather than all three.

- April 12, 1972 – The Super Pumper and Super Tender were relocated to the new firehouse at 172 Tillary Street in Brooklyn, along with Engine 207 and Ladder 110. This firehouse was built for the Super Pumper and afforded easy access to the Brooklyn Queens Expressway and Brooklyn Bridge into Manhattan.

- November 1972 – A 1954 Mack pumper (Ex Engine 2) was converted into a spare satellite and housed at Tillary Street

- January 30, 1974 – Satellite 1 was moved to the former quarters of Squad 5 in Manhattan.

- April 1975 – Fifty gallons of Hi-Ex Foam was added to the Satellite rigs in 5-gallon cans
  .
- July 1, 1975 – Because of significant budget reductions, many changes to the Super Pumper system took effect including: The three Satellite units were placed in unmanned status. The firefighters assigned to the satellites were transferred to the engine company in the same firehouse, and if needed, the satellite(s) would respond with the engine company. These engine companies became known as “Satellite Engines”.

1. Satellite 1 was relocated to Engine 27
2. Satellite 2 relocated to Engine 72
3. Satellite officer (Car 71) was relocated to Engine 207 with the Super Pumper
4. July 2, 1975 – Engine 27 was disbanded, and Satellite 1 was moved to Engine 33
5. July 4, 1975 Engine 27 was re-instituted, and Satellite 1 was moved back to Engine 27
   .

- On November 22, 1975 more budget cuts resulted in more Super Pumper system changes

1. The Super Pumper crew was assigned to Engine 207 and when needed all three units responded as a group.
2. Satellite 1 relocated to Engine 9 after Engine 27 was disbanded (again)
3. Satellite 3 was relocated to Engine 330

- March 6, 1976 All second alarms citywide will get a satellite unit (with its accompanying engine company) on second alarm fires.

- May 5, 1976 the Super Pumper system was removed from responding to multiple alarms except for 775 boxes citywide, basically to preserve the condition of the rigs. The system would continue to respond on special calls and areas of the city with water supply issues such as Hunts Point and City Island in the Bronx.

- Super Pumper was used to supply water to Queens during the massive power blackout.

- July 1978 the three satellites were refurbished, one at a time, by Com Coach.

The beginning of the end of the Super Pumper system occurred starting in the early 1980’s. Even though the satellite units were refurbished, the condition of the Super Pumper and Super Tender were deteriorating, primarily due to rust! The last fire that the Super Pumper operated at was a 4th alarm at Brooklyn Box 772 on February 20, 1982, and the last run made was to a second alarm at Manhattan Box 377 on April 24, 1982. Over the 17-year career of the system it made more than 2,280 responses throughout the city, but due to age and increasing maintenance issues / costs it was decommissioned on April 24, 1982.

During the career of the Super Pumper, it was noted that the most frequently used components of the system were the Satellites with their large diameter hose, manifolds, and deluge turret. When considering replacement of the very tired Super Pumper, it was decided to purchase 2000 GPM Mack pumpers that were assigned to the satellite engine companies.

Although the Super Pumper was not replaced, it did evolve into the FDNY MaxiWater system established in January of 1984. The MaxiWater System consisted of 3 - 2,000 GPM engine companies equipped with a second section satellite hose wagon equipped much like the original satellites with hose, foam, and a large monitor, and 3 “back-up” 2,000 GPM pumpers. The engine operated as a regular engine company in their first due response area, and would only respond with the satellite unit on request. A MaxiWater engine company was assigned on all second alarms and special calls including working fires in the remote City Island section of the Bronx.

The MaxiWater system was replaced by the Satellite Water System in December of 1998 and that system remains active today. The Satellite Water System continues to do what the

MaxiWater system did, primarily to supply a high volume of water and if necessary, foam at major fires, and other emergencies. The satellite engines and back up engines are still assigned 2,000 GPM pumpers. The 4 1/2-inch hose has been replaced with 6-inch large diameter hose, and each Satellite carries a manifold, Hi-Ex foam supply, and of course the large capacity monitor.

The Satellite System components are assigned as follows:

Satellite 1 – with Engine 9 – Manhattan – Back up is Engine 24

Satellite 2 – with Engine 72 – Bronx – Back up is Engine 97

Satellite 3 – with Engine 284 – Brooklyn – Back up is Engine 330

Satellite 4 – With Engine 324 – Queens – Back up is Engine 291

Satellite 5 – with Engine 159 – Staten Island – Back up is Engine 152

Satellite 6 – with Engine 207 – Brooklyn – Back up is Engine 210

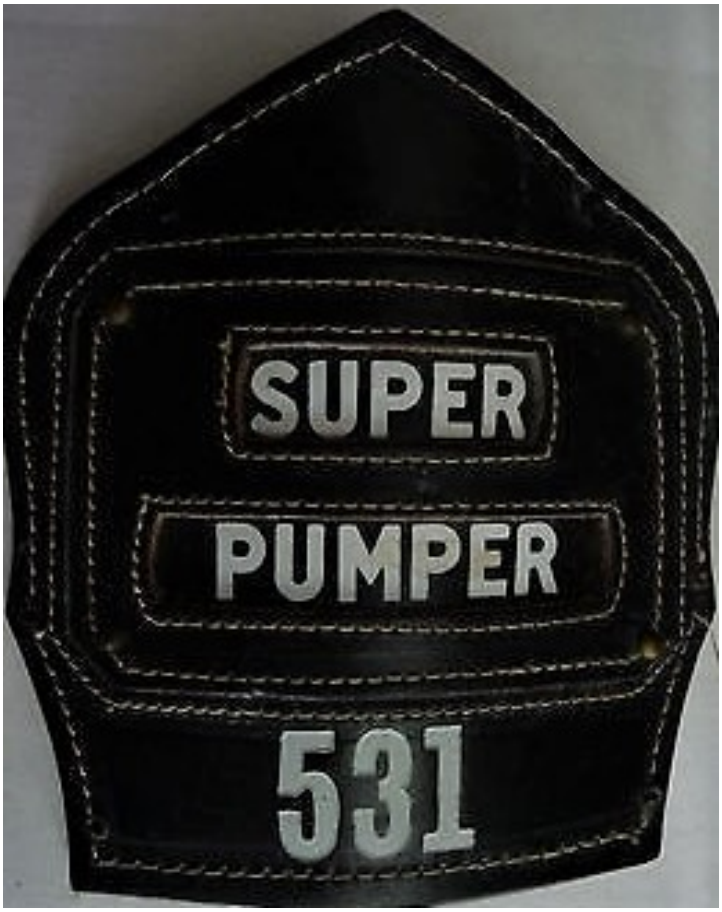
A Satellite is assigned on all second alarms citywide, and on some first alarm boxes in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges, and on 10-75 signals in areas of the city with water supply issues, including “All-Hands – Doubtful” fires on Staten Island. A Satellite unit is assigned whenever a Marine Unit operates at a land-based fire incident.

The satellites are staffed by firefighters assigned to the “host” engine company, and on a response the engine company officer will ride the engine and 2 firefighters will bring the Satellite rig. Upon arrival at an incident the engine company officer will become the Water Resource Officer.

If two satellite units are operating, then communication tour supervisors can relocate satellites as needed. If only one satellite is available, it will relocate and cover Engine 9 – Satellite 1 in Manhattan. Satellite engines do not relocate or cover other engine companies.

Even though the Super Pumper has been out of service for 39 years, the concept of the Super Pumper system has left its mark on the fire service today. 1500, 1750, and 2000 GPM pumps are now quite common on new pumpers being delivered, and 4” and 5” Large Diameter Hose has become a normal staple in fire departments far and wide.

All photos are from the collection of the late L. Murray Young. Special thanks to Retired Boston Firefighter Joe Hourihan; FDNY Super Pumper System by John A. Calderone; FDNY Operational Reference, 12th Edition, by James S. Griffiths.



The Capitol City is set to receive six new vehicles, including three pumpers, two heavy rescues, and a remounted fireground rehab unit *(W25- Editor).* Three new Emergency-One Typhoon pumps have been delivered and have been assigned to Engine Companies 22, 32 and 55. These are equipped with 1,250 gpm pumps, a 560 gallon tank and carry 30 gallons of class A foam. Rescue 1 and Rescue 2 will soon get their new trucks, with Rescue 2 up first. Also from Boston, Engine 52 remains in a “spare piece” following an accident earlier this year in which their 2017 E-One Typhoon was totaled. This leaves only one E-One Cyclone in front line service at Engine 51. Boston has also inked a deal with E-One for nine additional engines, 3 each in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

As for Ladders, there are 4 in the que at E-One with delivery expected late in 2021 or early 2022. With the exception of Ladders 1 and 16 all front line aerial ladders are E-One Typhoon METRO 100 foot rear mount aerials. Ladder 1’s Metro was damaged in an accident and is running with a tandem axle spare.

W25 Fireground Rehab Unit (Spare Unit) – 2021 Chevrolet GM515.2009 SJC Industries (Rehab by Greenwood EV)

Rutherford Avenue Conflagration

Thursday September 18th, 1941

5-4156

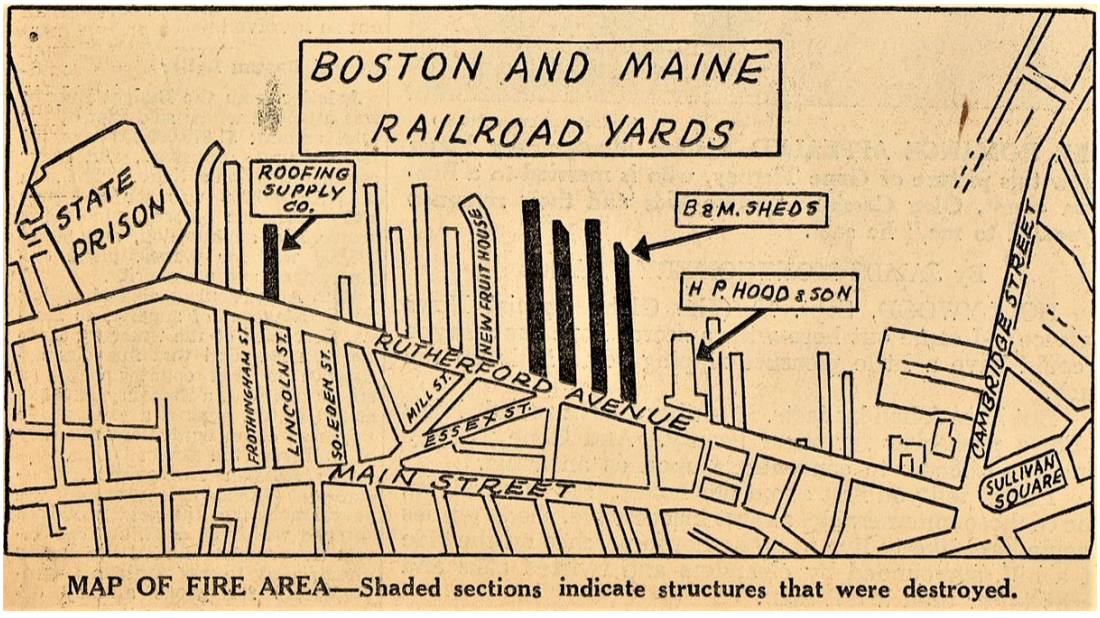
Original Story and photos by Member William Noonan

Alarm Response and Times by Honorary Member Paul Christian

Additional Research by Line Box Editor Frank San Severino

The last summer of peace before the start of World War II were winding down, autumn was approaching. The United States was starting to organize for war. Businesses big and small were gearing up to produce the tons of materials that would be needed, and was being shipped in convoys to allies in Europe.

In Boston rush hour was slowing down. It had been a beautiful day, blue skies, temperature of 76 degrees with humidity at 34%. Winds were light at 14 mph from the north for most of the day. As the fire started, winds swung to the northwest at 12 mph and remained the same throughout the fire. Sunset was listed at 6:49 P.M. Freight houses in the Boston & Maine Railroad's yard work was over for the day. Outside of Freight House No. 35 used by the First National Supermarket Inc. for the storage of canned goods destined for military bases. A watchman had punched his Detex clock at 5:13 P.M. and completed his rounds in No. 35. He stated that nothing was out of the ordinary, having passed through the length of the freight house checking the closure of the loading dock doors. The watchman then took a short break and started his rounds inside No. 34 house he punched his clock at 5:34 P.M. He made his way to the entrance to the freight house located about midway point in the structure. On his exit, he noticed smoke rising above the west end of No. 35 house. His view was obstructed by many trailers in the driveway and because of this, he thought the smoke might be from a switch engine in the yard. He hesitated in starting an investigation or sounding an alarm. After a few minutes, he realized this was an actual fire. He attempted to reach a fire alarm box on the opposite side of Rutherford Avenue, but was delayed in crossing the street by traffic. He saw a person at the box, concluded that the alarm had been given and returned to No. 35 house to notify his employer by telephone.



Map from the Boston Post. Collection of member William Noonan

At the same time, another watchman employed by First National, who at No. 28 freight house noticed smoke at No. 35 and ran to investigate. He found that one trailer was on fire at the west end and flames were attacking the walls of the building. He also attempted to sound an alarm from the box on Rutherford Avenue, but found that someone had preceded him. In the meantime, an employee of the Columbia Radiator Company in No. 34 house saw smoke and dialed Kenmore 6-1500 *(the emergency number of the Boston Fire Department – Editor)* and reported the fire. Fire Alarm received his call at 5:59 P.M. Fire Alarm stilled out Engine 32, Ladder 9 and District 2 with District Chief Patrick Collins. These companies were quartered 1,400 feet away from the fire.

Engine 32 pulled into the rear of the freight house where they found that the fire had extended to several freight cars and had a good hold on the shed itself. They ran two big lines into the deck gun stretched an additional big line to the top of the railroad cars. The lines were charged, and two streams were hitting the fire with no effect. Ladder Company 9 reported they had found two doors open on the east side, which had been reported as closed, but were opened by the watchman to assist the firefighters. Members of Ladder 9 attempted to open other doors, but were driven back by the fire which had gained such headway.

At 6:02 ½ P.M. box 4156 was transmitted and the balance of the first alarm Engine Companies 50, 27 and Ladder 22 responded. Engines 50 and 27 attempted to make a stand between No 34 and No. 35 freight houses. Engine 50 dropped two lines while 27 dropped a single line. By the time the companies had water they were forced to retreat. Now No. 34 house was well ablaze at its west end and was extending into No. 33 house.

Box 52 Association. Globe photo by Lesile Jones. Photo courtesy of Digital Commonwealth

As the Companies repositioned to the west side of the fire, District Chief Collins told his Aide to skip the second alarm and send in a third alarm. Fire Alarm sounded the third, bringing Engine Companies 36, 8, 6, 10, 35 Ladders 1, 24, Water Tower 1, Rescue Co. 1 along with Division 1 Deputy Chief William Quigley and District 5.

At the same time, a box was pulled in Somerville for the fire. One company responded in and was ordered to go to work. The remainder of the first alarm was returned.to quarters. Due to the mutual aid agreement, they were quickly sent to the fire as the third alarm had been transmitted.

Companies were having difficulty using hydrants on the west side of the fire due to the amount of heat and there were no roadways other than those between the freight houses. This entire area was taken up

with railroad sidings. Some Companies bounced over the tracks and were able to operate from these hydrants later in the fire.

At 6:07 P.M., the fourth alarm was transmitted bringing another five engines, a ladder company and District 7 to the fire. It had been eight minutes since the still alarm sent Engine 32 and Ladder 9 into the inferno. Now, as the BFD mobilized for what was going to become the largest fire in 1941, 13 engine companies, 5 ladders, a Rescue and Water Tower were all trying to stop the blaze with little effect.

The fifth alarm was sounded at 6:12 P.M. sending five more engine companies into the battle. A few minutes later, the order went out for 13 additional engines, 3 ladder companies and another Water Tower. Mutual Aid companies from the adjoining communities had moved in to cover vacant Boston stations.

At some of the buildings to the south of the large Fruit Terminal Building, men were on roofs fighting the falling brands with mops and brooms. At 6:38 P.M. a wood frame building at 290-300 Rutherford Avenue was ignited by sparks from the main fire only 1,500 feet away. Box 4137 Rutherford Ave & Dunstable Street was received, but not transmitted. A radio message was relayed to District Chief Collins who took twelve engine companies with him and they were able to hold the fire, but the building was heavily damaged. Six Boston engines and 6 out of town pumps worked. This was the equivalent of a third alarm fire.

The fire was still winning the battle and Acting Chief of Department Louis Stickle ordered signal 10-21 be transmitted at 6:53 P.M. recalling the entire off shift back to duty. At the same time, the Chief of District 4 ordered Fire Alarm to send “all available apparatus to the fire”. He also requested a police teletype message to all of the greater Boston area Departments that Boston had a major fire and “outside assistance was required”. This signal was known as the “Metropolitan Signal” and according to newspaper accounts it was the first time in history that it was sounded.

At the nearby Charlestown State Prison the staff and prisoners were getting nervous as the fire crept near to the massive stone prison. Warden Francis J.W. Lanagan decided to fight the blaze on the ground.

A firefighting unit was formed made up of guards, trustees. These men dragged hose lines up to the roofs and directed hose lines on the walls and upper stories. According to the Warden the prisoners remained calm. Father Ralph W. Farrell, the Catholic Chaplin along with the Reverend

Howard Kellett the Protestant Chaplin both rushed to the prison after the general alarm, and together they walked from cell to cell keeping the inmates informed of the progress of the blaze.

Department of Corrections Commissioner Arthur G. Lyman met with Warden Lanagan and plans were developed for the evacuation of all inmates, guards and staff if need be. State Police requested detachment of soldiers from the Army Base. The men, armed with riot guns and bayonets took up positions on the walls of the prison ready to help with the evacuation or if the inmates became out of control.

At the fire, as mutual aid was rolling in and getting into the fight, the wind from the north east pushed the fire into other freight houses and towards downtown and the waterfront. The first hose lines dropped had now burnt through and companies were forced to retreat. Companies were gathered to try and make a stand near the Produce Terminal. Deck guns on several hose wagons were charged and started to hit the fire. After a few minutes, it was realized that these streams were having no effect on the fire and it continued to rage out of control. The paint on several of the wagons was burnt and smaller lines had to be played on the crews due to the tremendous heat.

Ladder Company 18 had responded to the fire from its covering assignment at Ladder 9's quarters. On their arrival, they pulled 600 feet of 2 ½ inch line off of Engine 3 and operated a stream for over 12 hours! Three of their members suffered minor injuries.

The pall of smoke rising 200 feet over the fire attracted a crowd of thousands, as pedestrians and motorist flooded into the area. Some 900 officers were assigned to the fire. Police Commissioner Joseph F. Timility responded and requested further assistance from the Military Police detachment at Fort Banks. Soon, 100 M.P's rolled up in trucks to assist with traffic duty. It was decided to close Charlestown. Every bridge and the Sullivan Square inlets were blocked off and no one was allowed into the area. At the Turret at BPD Headquarters on Berkley Street, the voice of patrolman Michael Powers was heard of the radio time and time again relaying messages and moving units as needed. His voice was the calm in the storm. (*In 14 months he would be on duty the night of the Coconut Grove fire giving directions for the quickest way to get the victims to hospitals-Editor).*

The MTA Elevated line was not in danger, but passengers could feel the heat of the blaze. Many said that the best view was from the elevated trains and only cost you a dime.

Service members from the Coast Guard and the Charlestown Navy Yard were sent to the fire to assist in any way they could. They used hose lines and ladders and stood fast in the face of the heat wearing only their dungarees and chambray shirts.

It was now 7:45 P.M. and a request was made to the Metropolitan Water Commission to increase water pressure in the area.

Engine Company 46 was in the thick of the battle having responded from quarters at 6:22 P.M. They grabbed a hydrant in front of 263 Rutherford Avenue, used 100 feet of 3 inch line and 700 feet of 2 ½ inch big line. 46 pumped for nearly 3 hours and 35 minutes. The crew also assisted with overhaul.

At 8:50 P.M. Fire Alarm transmitted signal 10-24-4156 for the off platoon to report to the fire. They were released at 1:40 A.M and signal 10-25 transmitted.

The men of the newly established Civil Defense Fire Fighting Force responded and rendered valuable aid and proved the need for such a force should the U.S. be drawn into the war.

As the night wore on, the women of the Civil Defense Motor Corps set up long tables along Rutherford Avenue and supplied food. H.P. Hood supplied over 500 cases of ice cold milk for the hungry, thirsty and exhausted Jakes.

FF. Joseph Murphy Ladder Co. 12. Boston Globe photo

This fire was the largest to strike the City in some 31 years since the Blacker & Shepard fire in August of 1910.

As the night wore on, the original fire buildings had collapsed and the flames were now being beaten back. At 3:55 AM Fire Alarm received a call from the Boston Police reporting that the Ahern Sawdust Mill had collapsed with firefighters trapped inside the building. The Operator in Charge sent Ladder 20,

covering at Ladder 22 and Rescue Company 3. The Companies arrived and did find that the Mill had collapsed, but luckily no firefighters were trapped or injured.

Acting Chief Stickel at 6:45 A.M. ordered a detail of ten men from Division 2, ten from Division 3, three men each from Districts 1, 4, and 5 all to report from the on duty platoon at 0800 hrs.

The report from the Fire Alarm Office is impressive. From 6:01 P.M. until 10:17 P.M. seven box alarms were received in addition six still alarms and it was estimated that from 6:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M. that 10,000 messages had been handled by the five Fire Alarm Operators.

At 9:30 A.M. Friday September 19th the following Companies were still at the fire: Engine Companies 32, 50, 27, 36, 10, 35, 39, 37, and 5. Ladders 9 and 22, Division 1 with Districts 2 and 7.

The all out was sounded at 12:47 P.M. on September 19th some 18 hours and 45 minutes after the first alarm was sounded.

The investigation into the fire started well before the allout was sent. Since the fire involved Government war supplies, investigators from both the FBI and War Department joined the investigation. Many interviews with witnesses were conducted. Investigators sifted through the fires remains and it was determined that the cause of the fire was found to have started in a trailer backed up to the loading dock of House No. 35. The cause was officially listed as accidental and no evidence of arson or sabotage was found.

Background

Freight House Construction

Houses 32, 33, 34, 25

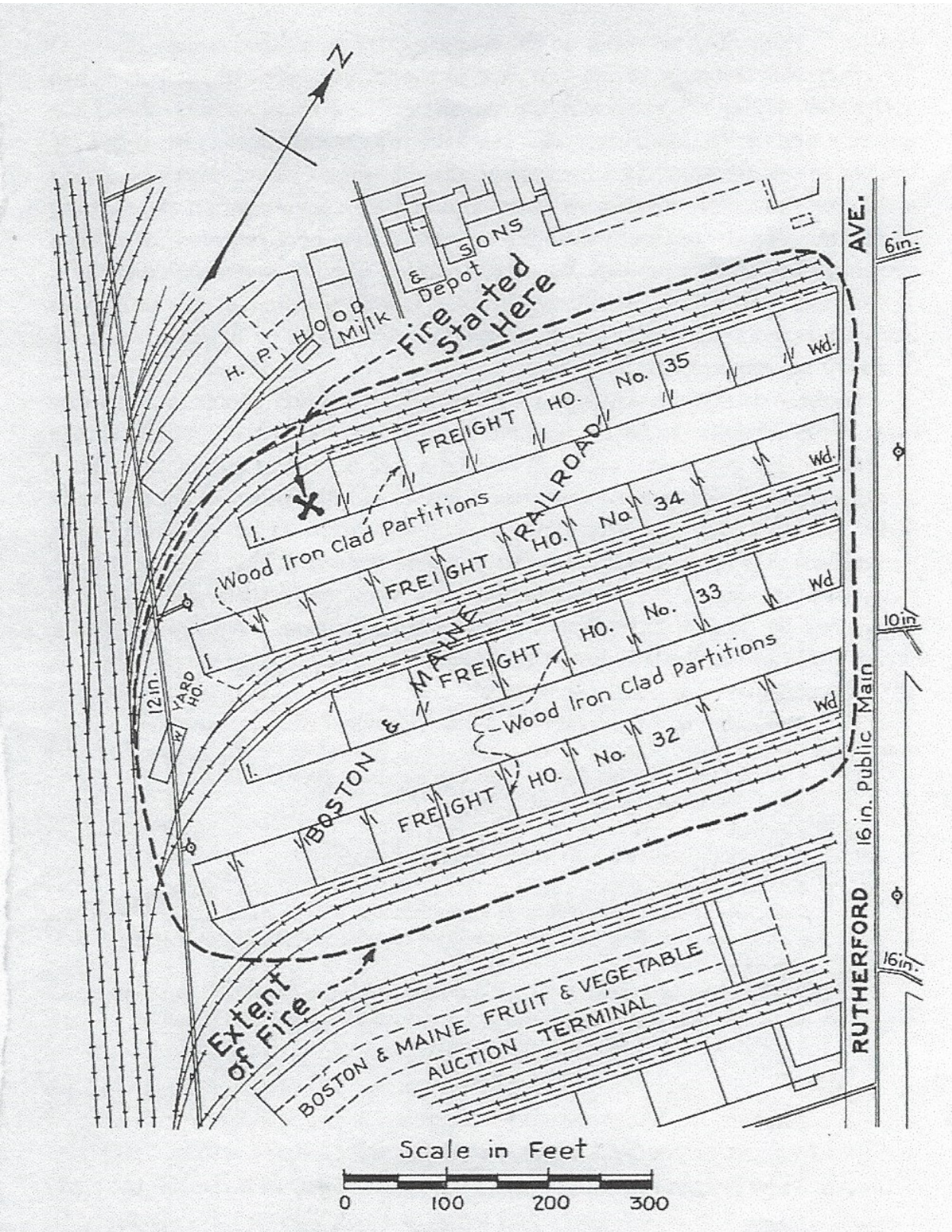
One story wood frame shed 620 feet long by 60 feet wide, 18 feet high, stood 4 feet off ground. 3 inch plank floor on timbers and posts. Open space under the bldg. enclosed in wire mesh.

Roof: 1 inch plank on light joist covered with tar & gravel. 8 transverse metal clad fire partitions diving shed into 9 sections 8 were 65 feet in length & 1 was 100 ft. Each partitions had two openings with metal clad doors on wood frames, few if any closed at time of fire

33, 35 were fully occupied and 32, 34 were partially occupied by the First National Grocery Store chain. Other tenants in 32, 34 used the balance of the bldg. for storage of building materials, plumbing and roofing supplies and other materials.

Water Supply

Water supply for the area was from a low service from the Metropolitan District water system 16 inch main passed through the front of the area and a 12 inch main at the rear. Both were well supported by arterial feeders and interconnected 6 & 8 inch mains. Pressures are approx. 55 psi. Hydrant spacing is frequent. Many of the rear hydrants are not accessible for pumping engine supply.



Map of fire area from Insurance Company report on the fire.

Box 4156

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Rescue	Other	Chiefs
5:59 PM	Still	32	9			Dist. 2
6:02 PM	4156	50, 27	22	3		
6:04 PM	2-4156 3-4156	36, 8, 6, 10, 35 15, 43, 13, 34, Som,	1, 24		W.T. 2	C-2, Div. 2 Dist. 5
6:07 PM	4-4156	26, 9, 39, 21, 42	3			
6:12 PM	5-4156	12, 37, 16, 5, 1		2		
6:16 PM	Sp. Call .	53, 3, 40, 25, 22, 18 ,46, 7, 4, 20, 24, 5, 33	2, 18, 12		W.T. 1	

15 Boston Engine Companies that did not respond to the fire.

Mutual Aid to the Fire

Cambridge Engines 3, 5, Deputy Chief

Somerville Engines 1, 3

Everett Engine 3

Revere Engine 4

Medford Engine 3 & Rescue 1

Malden Engine 1 & Combination A

Chelsea Engine 1, 5 and Chief

Wakefield Engine 1

Lowell Engine 2, 8 and Chief

Waltham Engine 2 and Deputy Chief

Belmont Engine 1

Melrose Engine 2

Stoneham Engine 1

Reading Engine 1

Haverhill Engine 1 and Chief

Weymouth 6 men and chief no apparatus

Covering Apparatus

Arlington Engine 2 to E-34, Engine 4 to E-51

Brookline Engine 1 to E-33, Engine 7 to E-28

Dedham Engine 1 to E-27

Everett Engine 2 to E-50

Lynn Engine 4 to E-11, also sent Engine to cover Malden

Milton Engine 1 to E-48

Norwood Engine 1 to E-30

Quincy Engine 1 to E-46, Engine 4 to E-20

Revere Engine 3 to E-9

Somerville Engine 2 to E-6, Engine 4 to E-32, Engine 7 to E-4. Medford Engine to cover Som.

The Fire by the Numbers

Engine Companies operating 56

Ladder Companies 8

Rescue Companies 2

Water Towers 2

Hose used 36,000 feet. Hose lost 7,000 feet

Firefighters injured 11

Civilian injuries 7

Military personnel injured: 2 USN members

Buildings destroyed: 5

Area burned: One quarter mile by 200 yards

Number of police at scene: 900

Number of Firefighters: Estimated 2,000

Damage in dollars: $ 1,000,000

Company Strength First Alarm

Engine Company 32 5 firefighters, one officer.

Ladder Company 9 4 firefighters, one officer

District 2 1 District Chief, 1 Firefighter Aide

Engine Company 27 3 firefighters

Engine Company 50 4 firefighters, one officer

Ladder Company 22 five firefighters

Total manpower first alarm: 1 District Chief, 3 Company Officers, 22 firefighters

Christmas Is Coming!

HALLMARK 2021 Fire Brigade Ornament

This year's ornament from the Fire Brigade collection is a plain 1966 Ford standard style pumper.

As in the past the ornament will be customized by our resident Master Modeler Charles Tentas for a local Metro Fire Department.

This customized keep sake will be raffled off at the December meeting.

Member Michael Boynton invites all members and their families to usher in the holidays at the 49th annual Medway Christmas Parade. All the info is on the next page. This is a wonderful event to take the family to, especially the grand kids!

MEDWAY 29TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE

HELP US LEAD SANTA'S SLEIGH!

DATE: SATURDAY NOVEMBER 27, 2021
4:00PM SIGN-IN & 5:30PM PARADE STEP OFF

STAGING: 88 Summer Street – Medway High School, Medway, MA

ROUTE: SUMMER TO MILFORD TO FRANKLIN TO VILLAGE TO HOLLISTON TO MAIN TO SUMMER STREETS – ENDING BACK AT MEDWAY HIGH

The Medway Fire Department and Medway Christmas Parade Committee welcome all fire departments & antique apparatus owners to join us for our 2021 Annual Christmas Parade. As a tradition here, fire apparatus from across the region are adorned with festive Christmas lights and lead the way as Santa makes his first appearance of the Season. It is a great treat for kids of all ages!

Trophies will be awarded before the parade for Newest Apparatus In Service, Oldest Apparatus In Service, Furthest Distance Traveled, Best Decorated Apparatus, Best Antique and SANTA'S BEST OF 2021 PARADE.

The parade steps off promptly at 5:30PM. Personnel will be at Medway High to assist. We also hope to offer refreshments to parade participants before the parade, again observing health & safe protocols. Please feel free to contact Deputy Chief Michael Fasolino at Medway Fire, (508)533-3211, or e-mail questions & RSVPs to medwayparade@comcast.net. Bring your truck and help us kick off the 2021 Holiday Season in a big way!! Thank you!!

APPARATUS UPDATE

By Line Box Staff member Michael Boynton
All photos by the author

The rigs keep coming for Boston *(see Boston Doin's for more information – Editor)*, Metro and all of Massachusetts. At press time, the Cambridge has received their new Ladder 2, a Velocity mid-mount tower, and has also received a fully refurbished reserve Ladder 5. This 2002 Dash previously served as Ladder 4 before undergoing a complete rehab at Pierce. It also features a placard system where the Company number of the truck it is filling in for will be displayed. Elsewhere in Metro, Wellesley received their new Quint 3, Quincy took delivery of their new Engine 2, Wakefield has placed their new Engine 2 in service, and at press time Melrose just received their new Seagrave engine, believed to be headed for Engine 3. Here is wishing everyone a very happy and safe fall season.

METROFIRE

Cambridge Ladder 2 – 2021 Pierce Velocity Ascendant 107' MMA Tower

Quincy Engine 2 – 2021 KME Severe Service 1500/750

Wakefield Engine 2 – 2021 Seagrave Capitol 1250/750/30F

Wellesley Quint 3 – 2021 E-One Typhoon 1250/470/30B 75' RMA

MASSACHUSETTS APPARATUS UPDATES

Berlin Tanker 1– 2021 Freightliner/KME 1250/3000

Beverly Engine 5 – 2021 Ferrara Igniter 1500/750/50F

Beverly Ladder 1 – 2021 Ferrara Inferno 107’ RMA

Lowell Engine 7 – 2021 E-One Typhoon 1500/780

New Bedford Ladder 4 – 2021 Pierce Enforcer 100’ RMA

Southbridge Ladder 1 – 2021 E-One Typhoon Metro 100’ RMA

Wenham Engine 4 – 2021 Sutphen Monarch Extreme Duty 1500/750/20F

Worcester Engine 5 – 2021 E-One Typhoon 1500/500/30B

afforded under our flag.

BOX 52 ASSOCIATION ELECTS T. G. TOOMEY

T. G. Toomey was last night elected president of the Box 52 Association at its annual meeting in the new club rooms at 88 Broad street. It was voted to have a reception and banquet in December, and a committee was appointed to make arrangements. A plan for debates and lectures was also considered. Other officers elected were: Vice-President, H. P. Parker; secretary and treasurer, Harry Belknap; assistant treasurer, Neilson Whitney; directors, George Cole, William E. Dolan, W. F. Leeman and E. H. Milliken.

From the Boston Post November 6, 1919. Collection of member William Noonan.

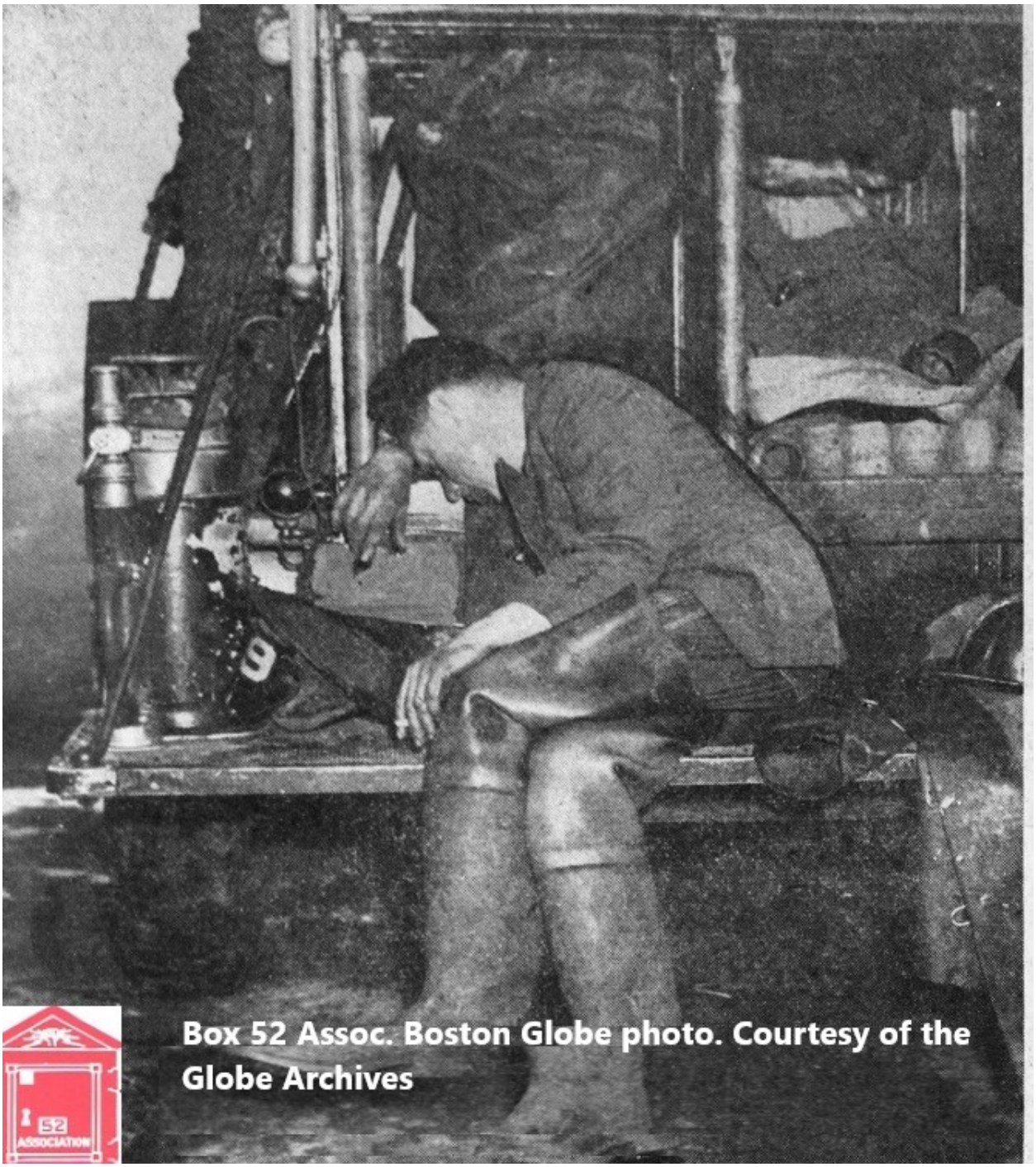


Photo from the Morning Globe Sept. 19, 1941.